



Bethesda Community

GARDEN CLUB

"Ninety-six Years of Brightening Lives and Landscapes"

www.bethesdacommunitygardenclub.org

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Member of
The National Capital Area
Garden Clubs and
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Garden Clubs, Inc.

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Dawn Landsman brought a lovely spring-like arrangement for the January meeting. See more photos on page 5.

All photos are by Vickie Baily unless otherwise noted.

Remedies for the Droghte of March and All the Other Months as Well

Jane Malish

Why wait helplessly for the sweet showers of April (and other months) to bathe every veyne in swich licour (copied directly from Chaucer) when, using tips and information from **Kathy Jentz**, garden guru, current president of the Silver Spring Garden Club and our February speaker, we can learn to garden successfully in the dry shade that afflicts so many of our yards.

Kathy last addressed the club in 2016 on getting the garden ready for winter. She is, in addition to her position as head of the Silver Spring Garden Club, editor and publisher of *Washington Gardener*, an on line magazine dedicated to local gardeners' interests. She also writes four blogs on garden topics. She's recently begun teaching classes and lecturing on flower arranging. She also works part time for Action Committee for Transit supporting car-alternative travel in the Metro area. She herself does not own a car. She shared a favorite quote from Emma Goldman which neatly sums up her approach to life, "I'd rather have roses on my table than diamonds on my neck." It would be convenient if we all felt that way; as for me I'd settle for both, knowing I'll get neither. But we will all get soup for lunch, with grateful thanks to the lunch committee. Hope to see you all on **Wednesday, February 26** for this inspiring, motivating lecture.

The meeting will be at St. Mark Presbyterian Church, 10701 Old Georgetown Road, North Bethesda.

Silent Auction Returns to Help You Declutter

Candy Kessel

Our February 26 general meeting gives you a chance to get rid of unwanted garden-related items as well as hear an excellent speaker and to have lunch with friends old and new. As you're cleaning out closets, basement, garage, etc. on these miserable winter days, please pull out all those garden gizmos you no longer want or use. Then bring them—garden art, plant stands, nice pots, unwanted tools, interesting décor items, etc.—to be raffled off in a silent auction to the highest bidder. Please do not bring garden books, flimsy plastic pots or terra cotta pots.

Our silent auctions of unwanted treasures are becoming a club tradition. Last year club members donated more than 85 items which raised nearly \$600 for the 11th Street Bridge Project. This year's auction proceeds will go to one of the horticulture/environmental organizations the club supports.

The silent auction will start as soon as set-up is completed so please arrive early with your unwanted treasures so we can line them up with bidding sheets. Bring your checkbook and/or extra cash so you can bid enthusiastically and pay for your purchases promptly.

If you have any questions please contact Candy Kessel: candykessel36@gmail.com; 202-415-7828.

Welcome new member Ginger Macomber

I have lived in Potomac for 25 years (after moving from Brooklyn NY), and for the past 25 years I have been trying to landscape my rather shady garden and protect it from deer—a constant challenge. I spend a good part of the summer in rural Ontario, Canada where amazingly the deer do not eat my hostas!

I retired in 2014 from a long career in the federal government working on community development and affordable housing—first in New York City and then in Washington DC. My initial assignment was managing an urban vest-pocket park program. Retirement has given me time to finally join organizations and pursue various interests like the Garden Club—as well as book groups, advocacy, kayaking, yoga, and travel. One of the trips that I always look forward to is the Philadelphia Flower Show.

I am married and have two married children and recently became a grandmother!

Save The Date!!

BCGC Annual Picnic—Wednesday, June 3 at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, Vienna, VA

More information coming soon!

Think Plant Sale! (Thursday, May 14, 7 am to 1 pm)

Barbara Collier

Yes, it's time to start thinking, and soon comes the doing. Right now: please think about what plants your garden can provide: are there things you might want to divide or have too

2019–2020 Plant Sale Committee

Co-chairs: Elaine Hope

Nina Stark-Slapnik

Judy Termini

Members: Barbara Collier Candy Kessel

Marty Fears Carolyn Kulik

Hillary Fitis Carol Meyers

Kay Hager Janine Trudeau

Karin Kelleher

See your directory for contact information

much of? Please don't assume that just because something is running riot in your yard, no one else would want it, or everyone already has it. Contact the committee (see box) if you want to line up people to help you dig, pot, and label. In March (as weather permits), the actual digging can start.

We hope that most people who have plants dug in their own gardens will be able to take care of the potted up plants until the sale (Thursday, May 14, 7 am to 1 pm!). However, this is not always the case, and especially if we are lucky enough to find some tear-downs with good gardens, we will need volunteers to offer space for holding the plants. Let the plant sale committee know if you have any outdoor space (even small) where you can keep plants in pots. You would be asked to keep the plants watered (assuming it ever stops raining) and reasonably safe from deer.

In March, look for an email blast with links to the SignUpGenius web site, where you can sign up for sale and sale prep tasks. If you have any issues with using SignUpGenius, Hillary Fitis will provide tech support.

What to dig

Pretty much everything! There are only a few categories of plants to avoid:

- Nonnative invasives: things like honeysuckle, English ivy, creeping euonymus, houttuynia, barberry, common daylily, and Bradford pear. (This category does not include native plants that are aggressive or even thuggish, since some people do want them—but please label them aggressive.)
- Ordinary green hostas. We would end up with far too many, and they don't sell.

DUES ALERT!!*Suzanne Grefsheim*

It may seem a bit early for this alert, especially if you are among our most recent members, but dues for the next fiscal year (2020-2021) must be paid by April 1. There are a number of reasons for this, but most pressing is that our per capita payment to National Capital Area Garden Clubs is due April 1. So, not only do we need to know how many of you there are, we need the money to send it. But your dues also assure we can continue to support our conservation and beautification initiatives as well as provide stimulating programs for your enjoyment and edification.

Dues for 2020-21 continue to be \$40. Pay \$40 by cash or check (checks preferred) made out to BCGC.

Dues will be collected at the February and March meetings by Suzanne Grefsheim

Or mail a check for \$40 made out to BCGC, to Suzanne Grefsheim, PO Box 175, Garrett Park, MD 20896 Deadline is April 1.

Thank you!

- Plants that are patent protected. (Please see the plant sale article in the September newsletter for more information.)
- Bulbs, unless actually flowering. These don't sell, so share those with your friends and neighbors.
- Mystery plants. If you don't know a plant's identity, try to find someone who does. We end up throwing these away, since who knows what might creep in?

If you have doubts or questions, please ask.

Join our tree—No climbing required

This year we will be coordinating volunteers for our digs using a telephone tree. So if you are willing to dig, pot, or label, please contact Candy Kessel or Carol Meyers, who will be in charge of setting up and managing the tree.

Candy and Carol will sit atop the tree, with one or two lower branches of volunteer callers and

a base of diggers and potters. Those at the tree top will begin by contacting the first set of volunteers, who will in turn call and sign up those below, and so on, reporting back up to the top. If you want to join this arboreal adventure, Candy and Carol will provide you with more details.

Plant Sale 101

Are you a new member? Then maybe you want an overview of the workings of the plant sale (Thursday, May 14, 7 am to 1 pm!) and the run-up to the sale.

First: getting the plants! You've probably gathered that already. We dig them in our own gardens, in other members' gardens, in our neighbors' gardens (with permission, of course), and at tear-downs. Some of us choose to start plants from seed to bring to the sale. Keep alert for opportunities, and let the plant sale committee know if you have an idea or need help.

In March you will receive an email blast with signup opportunities big and small, which will provide lots of nitty-gritty information. We really need you to sign up (rather than just turning up) so that we know where we need to fill gaps.

March is also the time when we start asking you to publicize the sale (Thursday, May 14, 7 am to 1 pm!). We will have both paper and electronic flyers and posters, and we ask that you post information on your neighborhood listserv, in local stores, post offices, houses of worship, libraries, community centers, and so on. Attaching signs to your car windows is also good.

In the time immediately before the sale, things get hot and heavy: potted plants need to be cleaned up (dead leaves and stray weeds removed) and plant markers verified. We take the plants to a designated staging area, where over a few days volunteers check and price them, and arrange them by type (shade, sun, species, and so on) for more efficient transport and sale setup.

Then the great transport effort begins: getting the plants from the staging area to the sale. The day before the sale, volunteers take vehicles to

the staging area and load them; the next morning, they get up before the crack of dawn and deliver the pots to the sale site between 5:30 and 6:00 am. It takes time to unload and organize plants before the opening whistle at 7 am—and the date? Why, Thursday, May 14!

On sale day itself, we need people to help with setup, work the sales floor, tally customers' purchases, ring up purchases, provide security, shoo people away from tempting but forbidden parking areas, provide snacks for hungry workers, clean up after the sale, and other tasks. You sign up to do these tasks within specific time windows, as you are not expected to spend the whole day at the sale (unless you want to, of course).

Questions? Talk to plant sale committee members, your mentor if you have one, and other club members. And remember to mark your calendars for Thursday, May 14, 7 am to 1 pm!

In Case You Missed It

Vickie Baily was featured in John Kelly's column in the *Washington Post* dated Feb. 11, 2020 (see link) where she discusses how birds and wildlife have made themselves at home in a closed golf course.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/this-rockville-golf-course-is-full-of-birdies—the-feathered-kind/2020/02/10/5e163b6c-4c1f-11ea-9b5c-eac5b16dafaa_story.html

Notes from Overground

Barbara Collier

Here at the end of winter is a good time to revisit the topic of winter sowing—or at this point, perhaps, early spring sowing. *Winter sowing* does not mean either starting seeds indoors or direct sowing outdoors; rather, it is a technique for starting seeds outdoors in containers during the winter. It is particularly good for seeds that require cold stratification (that is, a period of chilling) before germination, as many of our native perennials do. In brief, you sow seeds in miniature “greenhouses” made from recycled translucent plastic containers and set

them outside; the seeds then germinate when they detect the right conditions (see the [November 2017](#) newsletter for more on the technique).

But as I mentioned in the [February 2019](#) newsletter, the technique also works for starting seeds that germinate in warm soil. The seeds still germinate at the right time, but in this case, that time is later in the spring, when the soil is warmer.

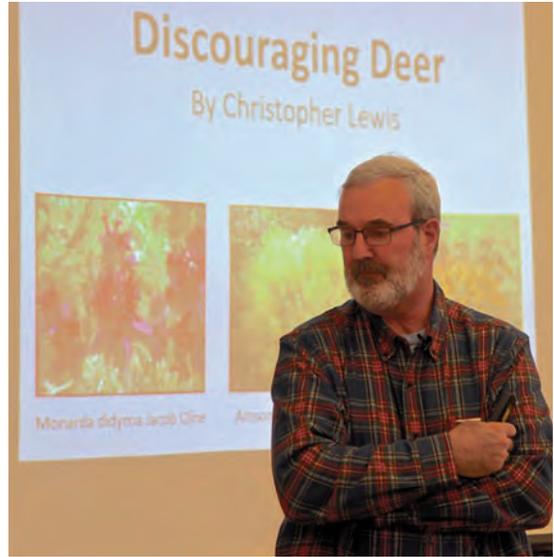
Last year I tried some native plant seeds that germinate in warm soil, planting them in recycled plug trays and giving them plenty of time to germinate. I had good success with purple love grass, *Eragrostis spectabilis*, getting enough specimens to make a good start on covering a small hillside. So this year I plan to try some March “winter” sowing with seeds that require warmer soil temperatures, including more annuals, both native and nonnative.

I don't plan to try this for all my seeds: some I will direct sow outside later (such as zinnias and nasturtiums), since they seem to prefer being sown where they are to grow. Some, including *Hibiscus sabdariffa* (red roselle), I will start inside on heated mats, since they are tropical and might not mature early enough if started outside.

On a somewhat related topic, I hope you left your fall cleanup till spring to let birds eat seedheads and let beneficial insects overwinter in leaf litter and dead plant stalks. If you did, it's a good idea to keep waiting until the daytime temperatures are consistently above 50°F. (Isn't it nice to have a reason to do less work?) If you absolutely can't wait and must start cutting stalks that insects might be hiding in, try to cut them tall (12 to 15 inches or so). Bundle the cut stalks loosely somewhere and leave them be until it's warm enough that the insects are probably all out and about. *Then* you can clear a space for all the winter/spring-sown seedlings that you have to find homes for.



Many members now come at 10:00 in order to have time for socializing before the meeting starts.



Christopher Lewis, the January speaker, addressed a topic of special interest to gardeners in this area: Discouraging Deer.



Members helped distribute the table arrangements created by Debbie Shackleton for the January meeting.



We have a new urn! More hot water, more tea!



A group worked on adding picks to baubles for next year's Greens Workshop.



Carol Meyers admires a shawl knit by Arlene Howard.

HORTICULTURAL NOTES

Deer-resistant Color

Carole Ottesen

Spring is almost here. Plant catalogs arrive in the mailbox daily with offerings that are so, so tempting. Nevertheless, the omnipresence of deer demands caution in the selection of any new acquisitions. There is nothing quite as disheartening as adding a choice new perennial or shrub (unaware that it is deer candy), then, taking a morning stroll to visit the newly planted little darling, and finding utter devastation: a chewed up, spindly stick where it used to be.

While there is an abundance of attractive, rock-hard deer resistant plants, a good number of them are green. Think pachysandra, sweet box, box, plum yews, hellebores. Deer resistant color takes a bit more research. While green is great, color adds verve.

Tall purple *Loropetalum* now has some diminutive cousins. Least in stature among them is 'Purple Pixie,' an ever-purple shrub that stays under two-feet tall, but weeps gracefully over the ground to five feet wide. In late spring to early summer it is studded with starry shocking pink flowers.

Taller and not quite as wide, delectable 'Spilled Wine' weigela grows to three-feet tall and spreads to four-feet wide in sun. Its foliage is a dark purple that does not fade over summer, but deepens instead to near black. After a spring flush of tubular hot pink flowers (hummingbird magnets), 'Spilled Wine' will flower sporadically until fall.

Purple not your thing? Perennial *Allium* 'Millenium' produces politely pink powder puffs in late summer. At about fifteen-inches tall, this allium serves as a deciduous ground-cover that reproduces quickly and attracts clouds of butterflies when it blooms. Deer don't even try it.

Nor do deer bother with naked ladies, *Lycoris squamigera*, a bulb that sends up stout green



Allium 'Millenium' (top) and "Golden Mop" cypress

Photos by Carole Ottesen

leaves in February, then disappears in late spring. Big pink blooms appear suddenly in late summer, shooting up on tall, leafless stalks. Naked ladies make great cut flowers.

Yellow 'Golden Mop' cypress is a dwarf evergreen *Chamaecyparis* that grows slowly to about five-feet tall in ten years. If you prefer a shorter stature or a more manicured appearance than

its typically weeping shaggy stems, 'Golden Mop' takes shearing nicely. Otherwise, this bright, well-behaved, disease resistant addition to a shrub or perennial border is low-maintenance.

Deciduous *Aralia* 'Sun King' is a bold yellow shrub-like perennial for part-shade to shade that grows to a bushy four feet tall. Its vivid yellow foliage ranges from near chartreuse to lemon to gold. It has been named "perennial plant of the year" for 2020 by the Perennial Plant Association.

Blue flowers in spring are not the most colorful trait of perennial dwarf bluestar, *Amsonia* 'Blue Ice,' last year's PPA Plant of the Year. This diminutive cousin of the big, buxom bluestars reaches only about two-feet making it smaller and more manageable than its rambunctious relatives but sharing the same gorgeous fall color.

Sometimes there will be a deer candy plant you simply can't live without—like the gorgeous creeping speedwell *Veronica* 'Tidal Pool' with its vivid blue white-eyed flowers. If that is the case, be prepared to defend it. Because it creeps along the ground, it is within easy reach of deer. One way to discourage herbivores is to spritz it with something smelly and, even better, encircle it with pointy wooden barbecue skewers in the hope that an uncomfortable experience will have a lasting effect.



Amsonia 'Blue Ice'

Otherwise, choosing colorful plants that deer ignore is an easier way to achieve color and sanity in the garden.



Trying to save *Veronica* 'Tidal Pool' from deer browse

Vickie Baily is adding to the collection of member photos printed in the 2018-2019 Yearbook. Please clip out and add the following photo to your Yearbook:



Betsy James